

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02

OPIC-03 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 /103 W

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R 011131Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4334

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USUN NEW YORK 437

CONFIDENTIAL COLOMBO 767

E.O. 11652:MGDS

TAGS: PFOR, PORG, PINT,CE

SUBJECT: PRIMIN'S VISIT/YUGOSLAVIA AND HER CONCERNS RE SUMMIT

1. IN CONVERSATION WITH PRIME MINISTER BANDARANAIKE AT SOCIAL
FUNCTION FEBRUARY 29 SHE TOLD ME SHE PLANNED TO
VISIT YUGOSLAVIA ABOUT MID-MARCH FOR THREE WEEKS
MEDICAL TREATMENT. EXPLAINING THAT SHE HAD SUFFERED FROM
ARTHRITIC CONDITION IN BOTH KNEES FOR MANY YEARS, AND
HAD BEEN TREATED IN YUGOSLAVIA IN LATE 1960S,
SHE SAID THAT THE PROBLEM PARTICULARLY TROUBLED HER IN THAILAND
DURING HER RECENT SOUTHEAST ASIA TRIP. HER ARTHRITIC
CONDITION WORSENERD WHEN SHE WAS UNDER TENSION AND SHE
THOUGHT IT PRUDENT TO UNDERGO MEDICAL TREATMENT NOW IN
THE HOPE SHE COULD OBTAIN RELIEF IN ADVANCE OF NON-
ALIGNED SUMMIT MEETING.

2. THE PRIME MINISTER WENT ON TO SAY THAT PREPARATIONS
FOR CONFERENCE WERE PROCEEDING REASONABLY WELL AND SHE REAFFIRMED
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HER HOPE THAT THE PARTICIPANTS WOULD FOCUS ON ECONOMIC MATTERS

AND GIVE GREATER ATTENTION TO ASIAN ISSUES. SHE WAS CONCERNED, HOWEVER, ABOUT APPARENT EFFORTS OF SOME INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS TO CREATE PROBLEMS. FOR EXAMPLE, IT WAS LIKELY THAT THE TROTSKYITE LANKA SAMA JAMAJ PARTY, WHICH HAD BEEN OUSTED FROM THE CABINET LAST SEPTEMBER, WOULD TRY TO UNDERMINE THE CONFERENCE. THERE WAS ALSO EVIDENCE THAT EFFORTS WERE BEING MADE TO EXPLOIT RECENT COMMUNAL CLASHES AT PUTTALAM BETWEEN MUSLIMS AND BUDDHISTS TO UNDERCUT THE SUMMIT. (FHI/IT IS GENERALLY KNOWN HERE THAT A LIBYAN EMBASSY OFFICER RATHER SURREPTITIOUSLY VISITED PUTTALAM AND TOOK A NUMBER OF PHOTOGRAPHS OF DAMAGED BUILDINGS.) MRS. BANDARANAIKE ALSO SAID SMALL GROUPS OF TAMILS IN LONDON WERE INTENSIFYING THEIR CAMPAIGN TO PUBLICIZE ALLEGED TAMIL "GRIEVANCES" AND "REPRESSES" IN SRI LANKA AND THIS COULD ADVERSELY AFFECT COUNTRY'S IMAGE.

3. DESPITE THESE PROBLEMS, PRIMIN SAID THAT SHE WAS CONFIDENT THAT THERE WOULD BE GOOD ATTENDANCE AT COLOMBO MEETING. THERE WERE 59 HEADS OF STATE OR HEADS OF GOVERNMENT AT ALGIERS AND SHE EXPECTED MORE THAN 80 AT COLOMBO. PRESIDENT SUHARTO WOULD NOT ATTEND BECAUSE SUMMIT DATES CONFLICTED WITH INDONESIAN NATIONAL DAY, ALTHOUGH FONMIN MALIK SHOULD HAVE BEEN AWARE OF THIS CONFLICT WHEN HE AGREED TO THE DATES AT LIMA. NE WIN TOLD HER IN RANGOON HE HOPED TO COME BUT BURMA WAS SOMETHING OF AN UNCERTAIN QUANTITY. IN GENERAL, HOWEVER, SHE FELT THAT LEVEL OF ATTENDANCE WOULD BE HIGH AND SHE PLANNED TO SEND SRI LANKA AMBASSADORS TO NON-ALIGNED CAPITALS BEFORE CONFERENCE TO underscore IMPORTANCE SHE ATTACHES TO SUCCESSFUL MEETING.

4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH PM MAY BE OVERSTATING ABILITY OF LSSP, OF TAMIL MILITANTS AND OTHERS TO CREAT TROUBLE, SHE OBVIOUSLY IS INCREASINGLY WORRIED ABOUT HER GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO PULL OFF A SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE. AGAINST REPORTS THAT SEVERAL HEADS OF STATE/GOVERNMENT MAY NOT ATTEND, SHE IS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED THAT LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION WILL DROP. IF IT DOES, AND IF CONFERENCE DOES NOT LIVE UP TO ADVANCE BILLING SRI LANKA'S OPPOSITION POLITICAL

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PARTIES ARE CERTAIN TO STEP UP THEIR CHARGES THAT EXCESSIVE TIME, MONEY AND ENERGY HAVE BEEN EXPENDED WITH LITTLE TANGIBLE RETURNS.

VAN HOLLEN

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